

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 779

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION BERLIN

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

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EO 11652: NA

SUBJECT: GDR AUTHOR REINER KUNZE IN AUSTRIA TO RECEIVE LITERARY PRIZE

REF: AMEMBASSY BERLIN 526

1. EAST GERMAN WRITER REINER KUNZE, IN AUSTRIA TO ACCEPT THE

GEORGE-TRAKL-PRIZE FOR LYRIC POETRY, AWARDED BY AN

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INTERNATIONAL JURY, READ FROM HIS WORKS IN VIENNA, FEBRUARY 8.

GIVING HIM CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE, THE AUSTRIAN MEDIA POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS OUSTED LAST YEAR FROM THE EAST GERMAN WRITERS'S ACCOCIATION BECAUSE HIS WORK "DIE WUNDERBAREN JAHRE" (" THE WONDERFUL YEARS") DESCRIBED THE UNFAVORABLE INFLUENCE OF A TOTALITARIAN SYSTEM ON THE MINDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE.

WHILE IN AUSTRIA, REINER KUNZE WAS RETICENT, DECLARING THAT

HE IS A WRITER RATHER THAN A POLITICIAN OR POLITICAL JOURNALIST AND THAT HE CANNOT COMMENT ON POLITICAL DECISIONS. HE SAID THAT THE EAST GERMAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE OBLIGINGLY GAVE HIM AN EXIT VISA. "THE FACT THAT I'M HERE PERHAPS SHOWS THAT WE HAVE AGAIN MADE A LITTLE BIT OF PROGRESS ON THE WAY TO INNER SOVEREIGNTY", TWO PAPERS QUOTED HIM AS REMARKING.

2. THE MEDIA REPORTED HERE THAT KUNZE IS NOT ALLOWED TO PUBLISH BOOKS OR GIVE LECTURES IN THE GDR, BUT THAT HE HAS RECEIVED SOME 1,500 LETTERS AFTER "DIE WUNDERBAREN JAHRE" WAS PUBLISHED IN WEST GERMANY, AND THAT MANY PEOPLE STILL COME TO SEE HIM PERSONALLY. ONE PAPER WROTE THAT HIS EXPLUSION FROM THE GDR WRITERS' ASSOCIATION SHOWS THAT THE GDR AUTHORITIES ARE UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND HIS POSITION OF CRITICAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE REGIME. THE CRITIC OF A VIENNA RIGHT-OF-CENTER PAPER WROTE: "POLITICALLY-IDEOLOGICALLY HE IS NOT ONE OF US. HE IS A LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE GDR. BUT ON THAT EVENING, READING HIS POETRY, HE WARMED OUR HEARTS".

3. KUNZE IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID IN SALZBURG THAT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN HIS PRACTICE TO AVOID MAKING UNNECESSARY STATEMENTS WHICH DO NOT CONCERN LITERATURE PROPER. THE EVENTS OF THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE FORCED HONEST PEOPLE, HOWEVER, TO SPEAK UP, THE SALZBURG PAPER ADDED, NOT QUOTING KUNZE VERBATIM AND NOT EXPLAINING WHETHER HE REFERRED TO THE TREATMENT OF THE DISSIDENTS IN THE USSR, CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND ELSEWHERE.

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4. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD--BUT HAVE BEEN UNABLE SO FAR TO CONFIRM--THAT KUNZE WILL GIVE ANOTHER READING OF HIS WORK NEXT WEEK IN VIENNA. MEEHAN

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